Murder Can Be Fun

No. 6

Along Came

She died of a fever
And no one could save her,
And that was the end of sweet Molly Malone;
But her ghost wheels her barrow
Thro' streets broad and narrow,
Crying, "Cockles and mussels, alive, alive-o."

(Typhoid) Mary

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OK. So the cover ("sweet Molly Malone") has almost nothing to do with Typhoid Mary. Why don't you try digging up a photo of that phantom lady? It's worth a free 2-issue sub, or, for that matter, any neato facts/articles I missed. I think I got everything, even catching a slip they made in the BRITTANICA. You can footnote without fear, kiddies.

I've finally run out of #s 1,2,& 3, but am still getting ocaisonal requests. Are there enough of you out there dying to laugh at my feeble first efforts? I could re-run a limited edition for 75¢ ea., 3 for $2. Don't just send me the money (cash, as always). Drop me a line if you favor the ressurection & I'll make the announcement in #7.

Funny I should mention #7, but you should be forewarned that it'll be the long awaited I HATE SPORTS!! issue, & damn, I hate 'em so bad that I could put out 3 issues on the topic without mentioning cocaine once. The usual shoot for August, settle for September bit.

MURDER CAN BE FUN is published on a radomly & wildly oscillating schedule by JOHNNY MARR & is copyright 1987 which means you better have a good lawyer & an even better bank account before you try to reprint without permission. KILLKILL. Subscriptions are $1 for 2 issues, CASH ONLY - all these little buck checks raise hell at the local "We cash your checks" places. I'm sorry, it's just that they look rubber. MCBF is available in bulk for sale at stores, malls, weddings, & bar mitzvahs. Write for rates. The usual hickies to Eloise, Martha, & Anna, with equivalents to Mark, Scott, & Walter. Thanks also to everyone whose name I forgot. Time to mellow out now, like wow, dudes.

OK. All you old timers remember that I used to do movie reviews. You Johnny-come-latelies are probably wondering why I don't do 'em, since they are one of the mainstays of the lowlife scum culture. Now, I reveal the answer, these bitching flick rags which made my ignorant cinematic ramblings look positively redundant. Buy or die--

IT'S ONLY A MOVIE - the official organ of the PSYCHOTRONIC FILM SOCIETY, 54 West Randolph St., Rm.#606-E2/ Chicago, IL 60601 (checks payable to Michael Flores)($1.50 sample)
And a fun bunch of folk these people are, putting on screenings of such cinematic gems as ILSA * THE TIGRESS in Chicago. For those of us who aren't lucky enough to live within 200 miles, they publish,letters, reviews, columns, all kinds of fun stuff about your favorite trash movies, as well as offering video tapes for sale!

SUBHUMAN - 60¢ from Cecil Doyle/1509 West Saint Mary/ Lafayette, LA 70506
What hath the VCR wrought... The exploitation films Cecil & Co. dig up & review (at leghth) probably would have never gotten out of the can without the gift of Beta & VHS. We must give thanks & dance on the corpse of OLIVER's STORY

SLIMETIME - 50¢ from S. Puchalski/ 1108 East Genesee, #103/ Syracuse, NY 13210
Another VCR-spawned rag, with shorter reviews of the latest movies the "critics" label trash. (But we know better). "We Sleaze to Please" - righteous! Between this & SUBHUMAN, you can pick enough VCR fare for the next 6 months, & probably turn into a psychotic radioactive mutant zombie in the process. Gotta go somehow...

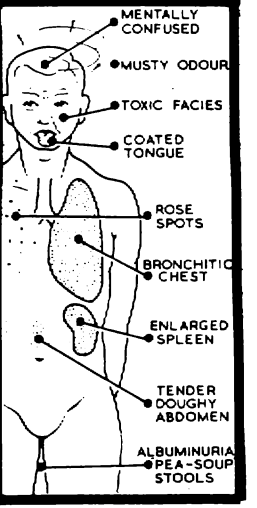
DOVER BOOKS CATALOG - card to 131 E. 2nd St./ Mineola, NY 11501
Dover publishes a very strange selection of books at real cheap prices (for new books, that is). How-to Magic, Ambrose Bierce, Gustav Dore, Wilhelm Busch, models of the New York Harbor...shall we say eclectic? Worth 14¢.

THIS IS OUR VALLEY/ $1(?)from Rex Doane/ 204 Santa Rita Ct./ Los Altos, CA 94022
A definitely interesting mag, pushing the boundries of lowlife scum culture where no scum has gone before. OK, it's all reviews, but different. Rex covers records (not by the usual bozos!), comics (ditto), snacks ("shelf life: the more, the better"), miscellaneous (of course!) & reprints the great "Danny Partridge - Broke & Starving" from the Enquirer.

More DRUNK DRIVING Posters - $6 from READER'S DIGEST/ Reprint Editor/ Box 25/ Pleasantville, NY 10570
Only a half-dozen posters this time, begging all the little adolescent morons of America to think twice before trying to bury the speedometer after downing that 6-pac. My favorite is "MOST OF THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY DRUNK DRIVing CAN BE FIXED IN A BODY SHOP" illustrating prosthetics.

Yes, There Really Was A

Typoid Mary



Today, her name has about as much connection to a real live person as Santa Claus's. If it conjures up any image beyond that of the creep who gave you this year's flu, it's of an almost mythical, drooling, disease-ridden demon, spreading death & destruction with a mere sneeze. Typhoid Mary - the patron saint of pestilence.

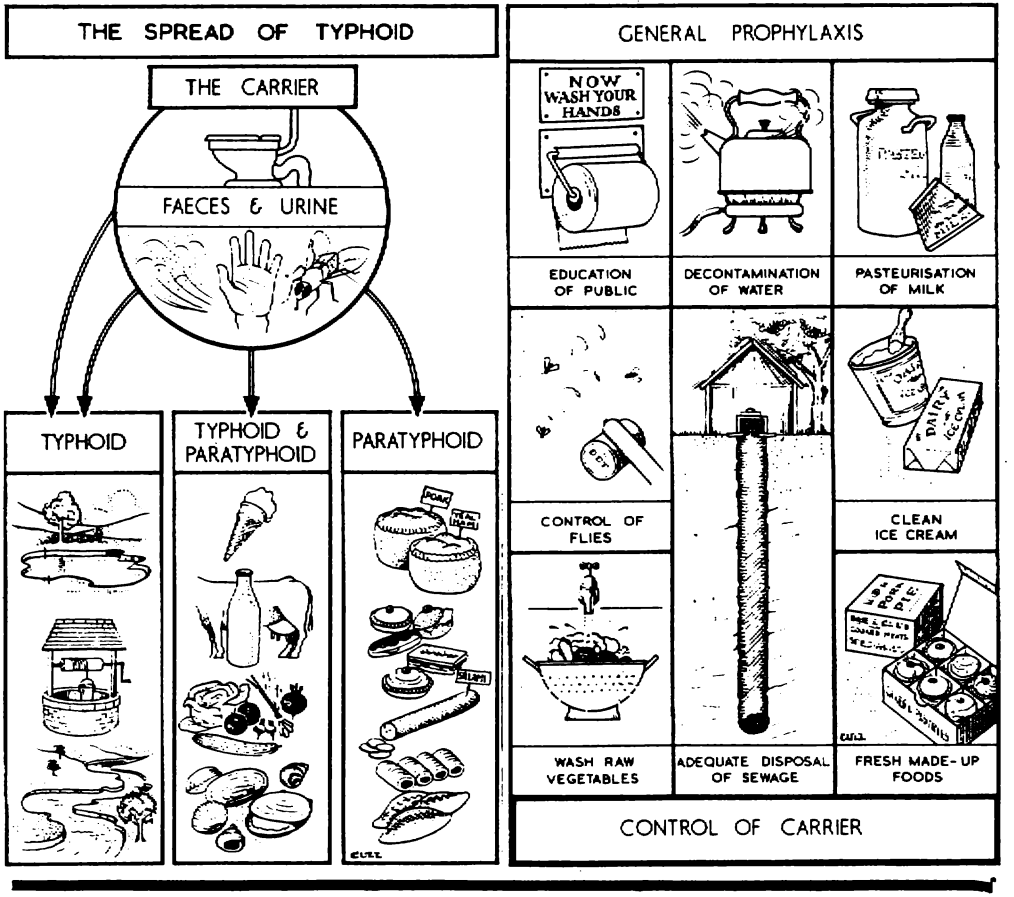
But, behind the name, there was a very real & tragic person whose only crime was to be the capricious choice of fate to receive the gift of the touch of death. She was a walking culture tube of typhoid fever germs, in a day when typhoid was a widespread & deadly disease. It incapacitated its victims for 4 weeks. About 20% croaked, while the remainder might snort such souveniers as abcesses, boils, and heart problems. It was not just another cold.

Her name was Mary Mallon, just another one of the thousands of immigrants from the north of Ireland who flocked to New York City by the thousands in the late 1800s. At the time of her unwilling thrust into the public eye, she was about 40 years old - a blonde, blue-eyed woman with a very strong, determined personality. Mary was quite capable of taking care of herself. She never married. Over the years, she'd worked herself up to the well-paid position of live-in cook for a succession of wealthy families. A very unfortunate choice of occupations, as it turned out.

It all started in the summer of 1906 in a mansion at Oyster Bay, Long Island. A sudden outbreak of typhoid tore through the household of prominent banker General William Henry Warren. Within a week, 6 of the 11 people living there were sick.

Naturally, the experts were called in to identify the source of this sudden mini-epidemic. The owner was concerned that the house getting a bad rep, making future rentals impossible.

At the time, the major cause of typhoid was thought to be bad sanitation - drilling the water well next to the cesspool & the like. The water, the milk, the vegtables - each possible source of contamination was carefully scrutinized and eliminated. Eventually, they were reduced to a shaky theory blaming an Indian clam-seller.



Then, someone had the bright idea of calling in the man who became Mary's nemesis - George Soper, sanitary engineer, epidemiologist, & typhoid fighter par excellance.

Soper's battles with typhoid went clear back to his undergraduate days, when he had burnt a house to the ground (with permission) which had a long history of typhoid. He had been employed by the State of New York, and had been personally credited with halting a 1000 case epidemic in Ithaca in 1901.

He immediatly checked the earlier work, & found it perfect. If nothing else, the house was sanitary. After discrediting the clam-digger, he then toyed with the new idea of a typhoid carrier. Some recovered typhoid patients continue to piss typhoid germs for months. Contrary to popular belief, it's tough to pee without getting anything on your hands. Just a little drop'll do ya. (Reason #1 why your mom always told you to Wash Your Hands).

A nice idea, perhaps, but no one in the house had ever had typhoid. Well, almost everyone. Soper couldn't find out much about the cook. She had been hired 3 weeks before the outbreak, & had left soon after the first case.

Her name was Mary Mallon.

Soper began to trace her past employment history, & was astonished at what he found. Mary quit jobs quickly, & often - and with good cause. Wherever she went, soon after, typhoid would follow.

Soper traced her as far back as 1900, and in all cases but one, there had been an outbreak of typhoid in her employer's house soon after she was hired. 8 families, 7 epidemics, 26 cases, 1 death. And, of course, no one ever suspected Mary. In one house, the owner had even given her a $50 bonus when she left for being such a help in nursing the sick. He may have been a little less generous if he had known just who had made them sick.

Soper finally caught up to her working for a family on fashionable Park Avenue, up near 60th. Not surprisingly, the family laundress had just been taken to the hospital with (you guessed it!) typhoid. In the name of true science, Soper explained to Mary, he just wanted to help her. Could she please hand over samples of her blood, feces, & urine?

Well, Mary was no fool. She knew great lie #2: "I'm from your government & I'm here to help you". To Soper's eternal surprise, she grabbed up a carving fork & chased him right out the door. As he later recalled, "I felt rather lucky to escape".

But Soper, like any other good engineer, was determined to have his samples. He cozied up to her boyfriend, & arranged to surprise her in his room in a Third Avenue tenement. His luck hadn't changed. Mary screamed at him. She had never had typhoid, had never given anyone typhoid, and had only helped cure typhoid! She continued cursing as Soper made his 2nd inglorious exit.

Soper finally dropped the do-it-yourself plan, & called in the City Health Department. They also tried once to reason with Mary, and only got a door slammed into their faces. It was now time to get serious.

On March 19, 1907, an ambulance loaded with a doctor & 3 cops pulled up to the house on Park Avenue. Mary tried again to slam the door in their faces, but one of the cops managed to get his foot in. She then ran through the house, out the back door, over then fence, & into the house next door.

They searched for her for 3 hours. Just when they were about to give up, the doctor spotted a bit of gingham sticking out of a closet door behind a pile of ashcans. And the fun was just beginning! Mary put up a tremendous fight; it took the combined efforts of all 4 men to get her into the ambulance. "...the ride down to the hospital was quite a wild one", the doctor later said.

Tests showed her feces to be crawling with typhoid, in what turned out to be a permanent condition. She was, literally, a "human culture tube". She would always spread the disease, & she didn't have to shit in the pudding to do it. It was just that old bugaboo, improper toilet technique. Even when her hands were contaminated, the foods that she handled which were then cooked were ok - sterilized - but the stuff that wasn't, like that favorite of the Warren family, ice cream with sliced peaches, would get 'em.

Soper begged Mary to discuss her medical & employment history. Being the first permanent carrier to be found in this country, there was great interest in finding out how she'd

become a carrier in the first place, & just how many outbreaks she'd caused. He promised to help spring her, if she'd co-operate with their research, & learn the proper hygiene (Wash Your Hands!)

Mary just sat impassively during his impassioned pleading without saying a word. When he finished, she got up quietly, and with great dignity, went into the bathroom & shut the door. That was her final answer. Nothing more was ever found out about Mary's past: how old she was, where she'd been born, if she had any relatives... twice Soper talked to a woman who he thought to be her sister, but he never found out for sure. Her life, up until her capture, would remain an enigma forever.

The Health Department locked her up on North Brother Island, off the Bronx coast. Riverside Hospital is also on the island, but Mary was put in her own cottage in almost solitary confinement. Her only companions were a dog & a nurse who (hurridly) brought her food 3 times a day. After 2 years, Mary filed suit for her release, alledging that, not only was she being held without due process of law, but that she hadn't even been accused of any crime. Rather aptly, she complained of being treated like a leper. She had never had, nor had caused, typhoid fever.

The New York State Supreme Court denied her petition. "While the court deeply sympathizes with this unfortunate woman, it must protect the community against a recurrence of spreading the disease".

But the overall public attitude towards her was sympathetic. 11 months later, a new administration in the health department paroled her, claiming that she had learned the precautions she ought take. She was supposed to refrain from handling or cooking food for others, and she was to report back to the Health Dept. every 3 months.

After being released, Mary first filed a $50,000 damage suit against the department which never went anywhere. She then complained that she had been deprived of her livelihood of cooking. They found her a job as a laundress, but she only kept it for a short time. She stopped reporting every 3 months & simply disappeared.

The next 5 years were hard on Mary (not that they were any easier for the people she gave typhoid...). She couldn't get any more cooking jobs with rich families because the employment agencies would recognize her, but she could still cook. And cook she did, sometimes as Marie Breshof, other times Mrs. Mary Brown, in a succession of rooming houses, resturaunts, and sanatoriums. Her boyfriend died, and, at one point, she was too sick (not typhoid!) to earn any money & almost starved. And her jobs never seemed to last long, because typhoid, like a demented dog, continued to follow her.

Oddly enough, she never left New York. It was if she had to tempt fate & recapture. Maybe she had an unconcious wish to be reimprisoned, or perhaps she just wanted to show them, and herself, that there really wasn't any more typhoid around her than around everywhere else. But whatever it was, she finally carried it too far, when "Mrs. Brown" took her final position: cook at the Sloane Hospital for Women.

3 months later, the hospital was in the midst of a full-blown epidemic, with 25 people sick with typhoid. All in fun, the staff started calling the new cook "Typhoid Mary", remembering the newspaper stories of 8 years ago. This rang a bell in one doctor's head. He called in his old buddy, George Soper.

Soper immediatly recognized Mary's handwriting, & the hunt was on. They finally caught up to her in Corona (Queens). This time ther took no chances. They surprised her by coming in through a 2nd floor window. She never had a chance.

By now, she realized that it was all over. 53 cases & 3 deaths had been traced directly to her, with many more undoubtably remaining untraced. She just couldn't live on the outside without having to flee an endless series of outbreaks, to say nothing of hordes of public health officials. She couldn't even claim ignorance anymore. She would always be a carrier. North Brother Island must have started to look better then.

She was formally quarantined there indefinitely on March 31, 1915. This time, however, the island came to terms with her. No one would ask her about her past life, which she referred to as a closed incident, nor would anyone mention typhoid in her prescence. They gave her a well-paid job running tests in the lab, so she always had a little money. She was even allowed to visit the mainland whenever she wished. Reportedly, she was a frequent visitor to a family in Queens who weren't too happy to see her, probably because of the scrubbings they had to give the bathrooms after she left. In all, her status was now more like a guest of the city rather than a prisoner. She never was released or escaped again.

But fate had one last trick to play. On Christmas day, '32, she had a stroke which left her paralyzed for the last 6 years of her life. She never walked again.

She finally died on November 11, 1938. No autopsy was performed, and her body was frantically rushed to a grave in the Bronx, but the lonliness, mystery, & fear she'd inspired in life would follw her past the grave. 9 people attended the funeral, all of whom refused to identify themselves. She had left behind a little money, but, even though it was widely advertised, no one was ever willing to risk association with the dead Typhoid Mary. The money was never claimed.

Back Issues

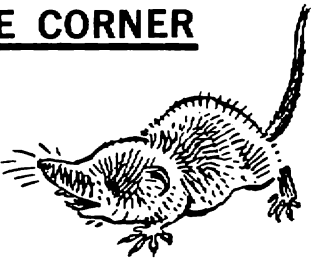
See this issue's editorial ramblings if you ever wanna see #1, #2, or #3 again. You can still get these if you act promptly, like now! Only 50¢ each, cash only.

4 The infamous Tacoma Bridge collapse, Slovenly Peter, a Ted Bundy bibliography, & true confession magazine guide. 16 pp.

5 Fatty Arbuckle taking the Rap(pe), Bible as exploitative literature, Jim Thompson, & true detective magazine guide. 20 pp.

Uncle John's NATURE CORNER

Shrews



After 300 years of Shakespearean allusions & your high school English class, you may be surprised to find out that there really are wild shrews. You may have even seen while on an early morning stroll through a verdant, dew-speckled meadow, a scurrying little thing, looking for all the world like a cute little mouse with a pointy nose.

But appearances deceive. Pound for pound, those cute little things are the most vicious beasts on the planet.

Right. Meaner than lions, tigers, bears, and even ocelots. All these ferocious carnivores look like mellowed out vegans in comparision. The only saving us from being shrew chow is their size. Most spieces only weigh a few ounces. In fact, the smallest mammal is the pygmy shrew, 2 grams, 1.5" long, not counting the 2.5" tail.

You can't let their size & rodent-like appearance fool you. They don't act anything like your pet rat, unless you're into jacking them full of speed & PCP. We're talking metabolic fireworks.

A shrew is a walking, ravenous appetite. They're always hungry. They've got to eat every two hours, and will starve to death in less than a day if they don't. Generally, they'll eat at least their own weight every 24 hours. They've been known to chow down up to four times that much. At that rate, you'd probably chaw your way through an entire cow, right down to the tail, in less than 2 weeks.

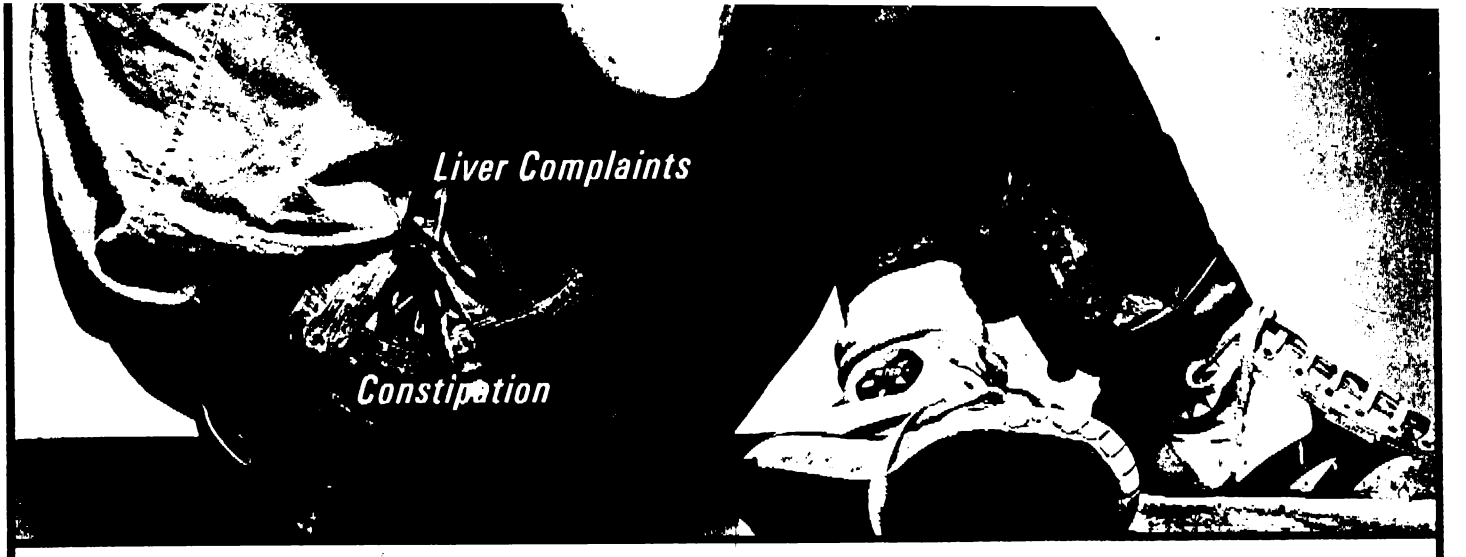
Thus the amped-out behavior. The shrew's life is nothing more than a mad dash from one meal to the next, a task not made any easier by the fact that it can barely see. They have to smell out, or just stumble, across their prey. For the most part, they feed of off insects & other small bugs, but a thing even remotely near their size crossing their path is fair game, even their own species. A cage with 2 shrews left overnight will be a cage with one shrew (probably hungry) in the morning.

In all, they're not very nice animals. They're practically hermits, only getting together for a few weeks to fuck until the kids can be kicked out of the nest. Most have really nasty-smelling musk glands which make them unpalatable to every other animal except owls. One type even has a toxic, drug-like salivia which makes life easier by doping up the prey.

But it's not as though shrews need tricks like these. Their inherent nastiness will do just fine. One naturalist once slipped up in stuck a shrew in with a rat for a few minutes. Even though the rat was several times the size of the shrew, it just cowered in the corner. A few minutes later, there was no rat. Or, once a naturalist mistook a shrew for a mouse & fed it to a snake. The next morning, the shrew was running all over the case, looking for another snake.

Aren't you glad they don't weigh 100 pounds?

YOUR MIND ISN'T THE ONLY THING HEROIN DAMAGES.



It can also have some pretty nasty effects on your body. All of which you can start suffering long before you become addicted.

You'll probably start looking ill, losing weight and feeling like death. You'll begin to take heroin not to get high any more, but just to feel normal.

And, as you lose control of your body's health, you could lose control of your mind too.

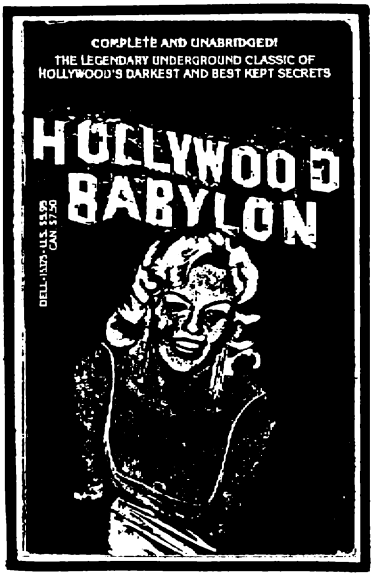
Until one day you'll wake up knowing that, instead of you controlling heroin, it now controls you.

So, if a friend offers you heroin, use your brain while you still can.

And say no.

HEROIN SCREWS YOU UP.

Two Visions of BABYLON



You can tell that HOLLYWOOD BABYLON's going to be a great book from the frontpiece: a 2-page spread of a lavish production number from some '40s musical, with the quote "Every man & woman is a star" - Aleister Crowley. This is not going to be another slightly sanitized look at the sleazy side of the celluloid.

Simply, HOLLYWOOD BABYLON is the best Hollywood scandal book ever written. All the others: HOLLYWOOD R.I.P, HOLLYWOOD CONFIDENTIAL, HOLLYWOOD USA, etc., are just plae imitations of HB. Call it the real thing.

It's jammed with neat pictures, not all of which were selected by a press agent, with brilliant, biting captions. Arbuckle's hotel suite: "A heavey rap". "Professional Widow, Mrs. Wallace Reid, leaves on tour". "Marion Davies welcomes Tom Ince". And, the text that goes along is even more bitchy & catty, a nasty gossip column elevated to an art form. Essential.

It certainly is good enough to live up to its blurb of "legendary underground classic". But, is it legendary? Is it underground? Is it a classic? The copyright page lists it as being published in 1975 - hardly old enough to be classic or legend - and by Straight Arrow Press, the book publishing arm

of way radical ROLLING STONE. Have the copywriters taken license once more?

No! What they don't tell you, naturally, is the whole story. The '75 edition is not the original HOLLYWOOD BABYLON. The book first popped up in Paris, around 1959, followed by American editions in '65 & 66. With each edition, the text was changed. This brings up a mouth-watering possibility - what sordidly sleazy scandals was Anger forced to purge from his classic before those daring young radicals at ROLLING STONE would bring it aboveground? Are we missing the real dirt?

Well, I can't answer for the french edition, but, comparing the 1st American ('65) & the '75 edition, not really. The '75 eidition, being longer, includes every major scandal of the '65, as well as a few new ones. Most of the changes made seem to have been done with the literary critic rather than the libel lawyer in mind. The style is not quite as bitchy, a little slicker, and a little cleaner - not as many "shits" &"fucks". All the changes are probably for the better, but it is sad to see a few of Anger's more colorful quips & smide details either dropped or watered down.

Among the quotes lost were: the perfect description of the town & industry, "During most of the '20s, Hollywood was scared shitless. And witless... Never have so few furnished... masturbation fodder for so many"; Arbuckle's rationale for ice in Virginia Rappe's cunt, "All she needs to do is cool down her cunt"; an epitaph for FW Murnau, who died in a car crash while fellating his 14-year old Filipino houseboy, "The least that can be said is that FW Murnau will go down in film history"; and, about gold-digging Lita Grey Chapman, whose grounds for divorce from Charlie the unspeakable perversion of oral sex, "a cunt she clearly was, but no one could call her a cocksucker".

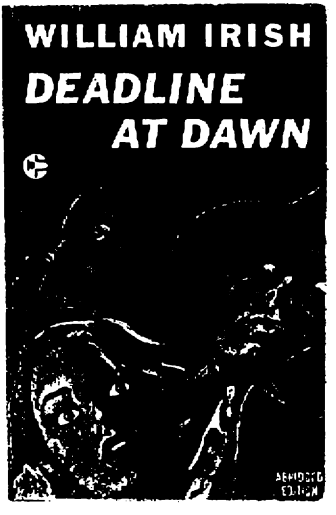
The stories of the major scandals were essentially the same, but here & there, a little titillating detail has been lost in the translation. Charlie Chaplin's first wife, cheating on him with Lillian Gish... Jane Wolf & William Desmond Taylor members of an Aleister Crowley cult... Marion Davies & Gina Lollobrigdida both forced to wear wigs... and, Tom Ince being shot in the act of balling Marion Davies (by "Citizen"Hearst, natch), instead of just being an innocent bystander catching the bullet intended for an amorous Chaplin. (That little guy really got around!)

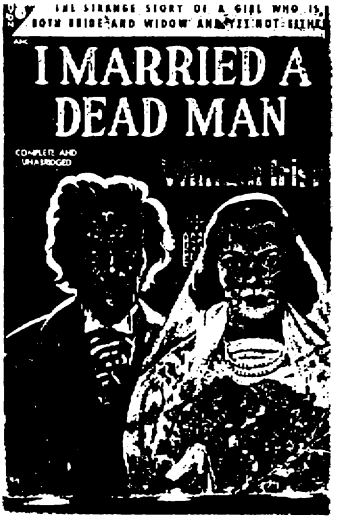
And, of course, there were a few nasty little anecdotes which were lost, like the man who saved a few enshrined pubic hairs of Rudy Valentino, in fond memory of a blowjob he once gave him. Or, the tale of the ultimate failed starlet, Arletta Duncan. Giving up on show business, she took the fashionable way out. After burning all her clippings, she climbed to the top of the 13th letter of the "Hollywoodland" sign & jumped - goodbye, cruel world? Well, not quite. She wasn't any better at suicide than she was at acting. She landed in a clump of cactus & didn't die for another 4 agonizing days.

Admittedly, it really is nice to know these things, & it is a pity they've been lost from the current HB. But don't let this get you thinking that the '75 edition has been bowlderized, and that you should cut off an arm & a leg or whatever to get the real thing, the '65. In a sleazy book of the magnitude of HOLLYWOOD BABYLON, even these nasty little stories are but little bits of icing on the cake.

CORNELL WOOLRICH

aka William Irish





Cornell WOOLRICH

In a world where Hitchcock is dissected with an ardor once reserved for "The Battleship Potemkin" & film noir is everyone's favorite VCR fare, it was inevitable that someone would notice the numerous "based on a story by Cornell Woolrich" credits. And now, almost 20 years after his death, the master is back in print - almost a dozen of his best books. You're a sucker if you don't buy 'em all.

The cover blurbs may be a little hard for all you cynics to swallow, "Poe of the 20th century", etc., but look closer. See the neato titles? I MARRIED A DEAD MAN. IF I SHOULD DIE BEFORE I WAKE. STRANGLER'S SERANADE. "I Wouldn't Be In Your Shoes". "Deadly Night Call". "Story To Be Whispered". "My Lips Destroy". If the guy can write 'em even half as good as he can name 'em... and 180 pages later, when you come up for air, you're hooked.

His stories were grim, grimy, and frequently gruesome. He worked from a basic hypothesis that thw world is a stage, we are but players, but there's a fucker back there pulling the strings. He wrote of perfectly ordinary people suddenly thrust into "the everyday gone wrong". No one controls their destiny - it's all decided by fate & a chain of monsterous coincidences. A man suddenly explodes, and finds himself a murderer, or at least thinking so. He kills his tormentor, but finds he has killed the wrong one. He wakes up from a drug-induced stupor with vague memories of committing a crime. Did he - or didn't he? And in the spirit of true suspense, sometimes Woolrich lets his characters cheat fate & live happily ever after.

In the hands of a lesser writer, this would all come across as pretty cheesy stuff, but not with Woolrich. He evokes the essence & angst of the little guy against the big city. Any chuckles are going to be from the blackly humourous hand of fate, not the audacity of the author expecting us to swallow this.

Woolrich's work basically fell into 3 periods. He started off writing a half-dozen psuedo-Fitzgerald jazz generation novels which are recommended for fanatics only. Then came his best known stuff, the pulp crime & detective stories. He ended his career with a few very intense"tales of love & despair". In all, he wrote some 22 novels & 250 short stories. There's alot of chaff mixed in with his work 'cos he was writing for a living @ ½¢/word, but he did have a very high percentage of gems, both in short stories & novels. A brief taste:

PHANTOM LADY: After a fight with his wife, Henderson spends a night out on the town with an anonymous woman. While he is out, his wife is murdered. He has an alibi, but not only can't he locate the "phantom lady", everyone who saw him that night swears he was alone.

THE BRIDE WORE BLACK: Julie Kileen's wedding ends with her new husband being shot from a passing car as they left the chapel. She dedicates the rest of her life to revenge: one by one, tracking down the occupants of the car, insinuating herself into their lives, & killing them.

THE BLACK CURTAIN: A man wakes up & finds himself on a street in a strange part of town. He eventually discovers that he's spent the last 3 years in an amnesiac fog - and someone from those lost 3 years is out to kill him.

"Eyes That Watch You": A paralyzed woman sits by, helpless to warn her son as his wife plots to kill him.

"Three O'Clock": A watchmaker's plan to blow up his wife goes awry - while setting the bomb, he is attacked by burglurs, and winds up bound & gagged in front of his own bomb, watching the minutes tick away.

"Too Nice Of A Day To Die": A lonely girl in the big city finally gives up & decides to committ suicide. But, on that last day, she meets The Man who gives meaning to her life. All thoughts of ending it gone, she eagerly skips off to prepare for the first of many dates - right into the path of a car.

Unlike many writers, his life was, if anything, even grimmer than his fiction. A diabetic, alcholic homosexual, Woolrich spent most of his adult life living in a succesion of Manhatten residential hotels with his aging mother, a lonely, bitter man filled with self-loathing. Once, back in his Fitzgerald days, he tried to escape. He moved to Hollywood to script one of his novels for the silent screen.

In Hollywood, he met & fell in love with a socialite producer's daughter. They were married, but the marriage was quickly annulled, & he returned to New York. Many years later, he liked to tell a story of how he'd spotted an attractive B-girl in a bar. He'd walked over & offered to buy her a drink - and realized that this B-girl was the rich young girl he'd married years before.

But, for the most part, he was a total recluse, his life completely dominated by his mother. It was only after his mother's death in 1957 that he started to emerge from his shell, and even then, it wasn't much. He would go to parties and sit alone in the corner all evening, drinking a bottle of cheap wine. Anyone who went up to him & praised his work would only receive a curt "You don't mean that" in reply. He would be positively grasping on the rare occaisons he went out with friends. Any attempts to end the evening, even at 4AM, would make Woolrich accuse his friends of just humouring him, that they really didn't like him. Only 5 of Woolrich's books included a dedication: one to a hotel room, one to his typerwriter, one to his mother, one to an editor, and one to "Chula".

He practically stopped writing those last few years, except for a final handful of "tales of love & despair". An untended infection in his leg turned to gangrene & had to be amputated. He couldn't, or wouldn't, learn to use an artificial leg, and spent his last few years in a wheelchair. He died of a stroke on September 25th, 1968.

He left behind a few uncompleted fragments, the title of one which has been frequently offered as his epitaph: "First You Dream, Then You Die". But his bleak life is best summed up in this quote from I MARRIED A DEAD MAN:

> "I don't know what the game was. I'm not sure how it should be played. No one ever tells you. I only know we must have played it wrong, somewhere along the way. I don't even know what the stakes are. I only know they're not for us.
>
> We've lost. That's all I know. We've lost. And now the game is through.

Jaded Eyes On [redacted]

Pilot Communications [redacted]

[redacted] Magazines

Honestly, if the old truism of "there's a sucker born every minute" even makes you smile a little bit, you've gotta check out the fine publications of Pilot Communications. Instead of the usual offshore real estate, these rags push the mass-production "alternative" culture, an equally bogus product. In the country of the dupes, someone's gotta do the duping...

By now, you've probably noticed the de-evolution of punk in the two genres it was supposed to annihilate: heavy metal & disco. Well, Pilot's firmly in to the idea of shaking one's bootie as a rebelious act. If you think $20 designer "Destroy" t-shirts are almost as hilarious as the people who wear them, check out their main title: STAR HITS.

Though it's available nationally, STAR HITS is kinda tough to find - seems enough parents have been scared by a magazine which encourages kids to (horrors!) dye their hair unnatural colors to pressure newsstands into dropping it. It's woth the hunt, though, to see '75 disco revived with funny haircuts.

It's easy enough to spot on the stands - DURAN DURAN is on the cover every month - but it's not just another screamy-bopper mag. These people really love D^2's music, too. To say nothing of HOWARD JONES, CROWDED HOUSE, DEPRESS MODE, BILLY IDOL, & all those other MTV bands you love to hate. If it's cute, plays synthesizer, & has a cockney accent, they'll drool about it.

The whole thing sounds like it was written by a little pretentious 16-year old English girl. (After all, aren't all the cool bands from London?) The interviews are short, insipid, and ridiculous. Guess rock stars reallyare that stupid. The features give you the lowdown on what's the latest in cool dancefloor sounds & scandals in the lives of the stars. Think of the thousands of little trendies across the land, devouring each & every work of wisdom from Mecca - New York.

But the best part is where all those little isolated, rebellios souls get their say - in the pen pal column: "Neurotic waver desperately wants Primal Scream Therapy"; "Grail overfloweth, there's rain, there's saliva, & there's you"; "Hyper 17-year old guy into major partying". Charming. You can send in your own, too - just drop a post-card to STAR HITS/ RSVP/ 25 West 39th St/ NY, NY 10018.

But a trendy does not live by music alone. Recognizing this, Pilot's started another rag, aptly called ATTITUDE, which they describe (honest!) as being about hairspray. It's jammed with lotsa pictures of girls with funny haircuts wearing designer bicycle shorts, interviews with irrelevant, inarticulate movie stars, and all those things a modern girl must know: how to be a model, how to get a boyfriend, and how to nightclub in New York. Also, they include the obilgatory quiz ("Do You Have Attitude") and the advice column - ask Belinda Carlisle! This magazine is going to be surreal in another 10 years.

Take my work for it, these will be treasured pop culture artifacts in another 10 years - yes, junior, things really did get that bad. But, if you're still feeling that being seen with these rags will destroy your own coolness, fear not. STAR HITS has, at least once, published contributions from an ultra-hip FORCED EXPOSURE writer. How radical!

READ HARD OR DIE

CURRICULUM OF MURDER by Boswell & Thompson (Collier, '62)
True Crime
Dedicated to "students & teachers who abandoned theri studies to commit MURDER", this makes a handy item to wave in front of your least favorite instructor, but don't waste your time reading it. B&T wrote this one for the conisseurs of the old school. Fuck reality - keep things all prim & proper just like an Agatha Christie crap novel. Totally lacking in blood, guts, passion, & pervisity.

U.S.S.A. BOOK I by Tom De Haven (Avon, 1987)
Hack Paperback Novel
It's 1996, and "they've" taken over America. Kiss freedom goodbye. Then durned commies? No! Surprise! U.S.S.A is the United Secure States of America, the results of a coup by the Joint Chiefs of Staff who immediatly outlaw rock & roll. Story aint too much, a teen getting involved with the rock&roll resistors, but this book is worth getting for sheer novelty value. II & III are also out.

A HIDEOUS HISTORY OF WEAPONS by Cherney Berg (Collier, '63)
Non-Fiction
A dry, witty look at the various sundry & ingenious ways man has used to rid himself of his fellows since the days of the stone ax, most of which (halyards, morningstars, pikes, etc.) survive only in the names of bad heavy metal groups. "It takes a very angry person to walk up to another one & wack him with an ax".

ESCAPE FROM ALCATRAZ by J. Campbell Bruce (Futura, 1979)
Non-Fiction
If more parents had just skipped the bogeyman & read to their kids from this one, prisons would be less crowded today. Scared straight, indeed. Things got so bad on the Rock that the cons were only allowed to shave under guard to prevent any quick wrist-slash moves. When they finally were released, most guys were crazy. Devil's Island sounds like Club Med in comparison.

VIOLENT SATURDAY by W.L. Heath (Black Lizard, 1985)
Crime Novel
Those who read this looking for Jim Thompson, Jr. (same publisher) will be disappointed. This book is not God. But it is good. Buncha tough cons try to knock over a bank in a small southern town. And you know it's gonna get fucked up. Lotsa blood.

DARK ANGEL by VC Andrews (Pocket Books, 1986)
Trash Novel
Whew! With VC croaking last year, I was sweating, afraid I'd spend the rest of my live hanging from a cliff for the sequel to HEAVEN, but luckily, this book ties up Heaven Leigh Casteel's story in a neat little knot. Of course, she has to deal with the cold, cruel relatives, the vicious snobby classmates, & all the horny young men (some of whom are related to her) panting for her snatch, and does so in a sufficently sleazy way that will not disappoint any true fan.

INCIDENT AT HAWK'S HILL by Allan Eckert (Dell, 1971)
Kid Novel
Kid's having a rough time around the house, so he splits for the woods & gets adopted by a badger. Has a good time, too. Author tells it straight (ie, the badger doesn't quote Shakespeare). Based on an actual incident.

LITTLE CHARLEY ROSS by Norman Zierold (Little & Brown, '67)
True Crime
When they snatched Little Sweetshit (kid was really disgusting) Ross, the kidnappers made history by being the first in America to demand Just Compensation. $20,000, to be exact, if Mr. Ross ever expected to see Charly again. Cops told him not to pay, & guess what? No one ever saw little Charley Ross again.

SAVAGE GRACE by Robins & Aronson (Dell, 1986)
****True Crime****
Maybe I missed something, but I gave up on this one fast. Crime was interesting - a fucked up rich kid snuffing his mom, but the book was done in this awful, EDIE-styled let-every-fool-have-his-say bit, combined with "Lifestyles of The Rich & Famous" Has anyone made it through all 456 pgs.?

RUSH: A GIRL'S GUIDE TO SORORITY SUCCESS by Margaret Rose
Non-Fiction (Villard, 1985)
So help me God, this book is serious. Deadly serious, 'cos you might as well kill yourself if you don't get in, right? No matter how stupid, mindless, pointless, & moronic you think Greeks are, this book is guaranteed to lower your opinion 50%. Sample: "What do sorority girls do in their spare time? Go to class." 'nuff said.

.44 by Jimmy Breslin & Dick Schaap (Signet, 1978)
Novel
Obviously, Breslin wanted to cash in here with all the publicity he got from the Son Of Sam. "This book is a work of fiction. For only in fiction could (they)... probe so deeply & reveal so much..." and, incidentally, save a few hundred hours of research time, "of the almost unspeakable truth about Son of Sam". Absolutely undistinguished.

THE PEOPLE NEXT DOOR by JP Miller (Dell, 1970)
Movie Tie-In
This book is the perfect tale of the '60s suburban teen-age drug paranoia, complete with all the wonderfull stereotypes. The parents are mindless, materialistic alcholics. Daddy tosses son out 'til he gets a man's haircut, and momfinds her perfect daughter tripping in the bedroom closet. Penetrating, soul-searing agony ensues. A total laugh riot.

THE DUNGEON MASTER by William Dear (Ballantine, 1985)
True-Crime
You oldsters may remember the wire service sensation a few years back when a genius 16-year old disappeared in the MSU steam tunnels during a game of Dungeons & Dragons. Now, the hot-shot detective tells all about the case, and it was a very weird trip indeed. Besides the steam tunnels, the trail went through Satanic cults, gay bathhouses, & the underside of railroad trestles, and uncovered nasty tales of pederasty & drugs. They found the kid, but he killed himself a few years later. Whatta waste, huh???

JOHNNY MARR
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INTERNATIONAL

Chief W. H. Parker halted use of kids to trap Los Angeles perverts

to:

☐ HOT!! OPEN UPON RECEIPT!
☐ URGENT!! OPEN PROMPTLY!
☐ TRASH. OPEN WHEN YOU WANT.